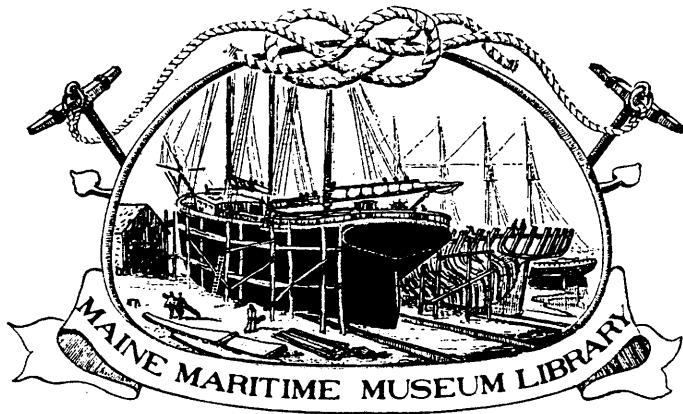


Maine Maritime Museum Library
243 Washington Street
Bath, Maine 04530
(207) 443-1316



**Inventory
for
Manuscript Collection
MS-6**

Riggs Family Papers, 1817-1887

by
Perter McCracken
and
Elizabeth Singer Maule

November, 1995
Revised August, 1996

Shelf feet: 0.25
Number of boxes: 1

This inventory is the product of a grant from the
National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

COPYRIGHT RESTRICTION

This collection is the physical property of the Maine Maritime Museum Library. **Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors of the various items in the collection, or to their legal representatives, or to Maine Maritime Museum.** For further information, consult the library staff.

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted materials.

Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specified conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be "used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship or research." If a user later uses a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement.

This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if fulfillment of the order is judged in violation of copyright law.

It is the user's responsibility to understand the copyright law concerning the use of the historical documents contained in this library.

Copyright (C) 1994 by the Maine Maritime Museum.

No part of this inventory may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the Maine Maritime Museum Library.

Abstract

Riggs family.

Papers, 1817-1887.

1 box (1/4 shelf foot).

Prominent family in Georgetown, Maine.

Papers of the Riggs family, primarily relating to their shipbuilding and shipping interests centered in Georgetown, ME, for seventy years of the nineteenth century. Benjamin Riggs (1759-1846), his sons James (1785-1866) and Moses (1795-1886), and his grandson Kervin (1829-1906) were all ship captains who handled coastwise and West Indies

trading from their homes in Georgetown as well. For a while in the 1860's Moses was in a business partnership known as Sampson & Riggs. Also includes a record of fish caught on four small schooners, Capt. John Johnson [of Woolwich, ME?], in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, ca. 1832-1844.

Gift of Roland E. Peterson, 1965 and 1967. G65.692 and G67.1962-1973.

Finding aid in repository folder level control.

Added entries: Riggs, Benjamin (1759-1846) Riggs, James (1785-1866) Riggs, Moses (1795-1886) Riggs, Kervin (1829-1906) Georgetown, ME Sasanoa River (ME) Shipping Shipbuilding-- Georgetown, ME Coastwise shipping West Indies trade Ships-- Equipment and supplies Fishing--Records Johnson, John, Captain Saint Lawrence, Gulf of.

Acquisition

The papers consist of two donations from Roland E. Peterson in 1965 and 1967, identified by accession numbers G65.692 and G67.1962 - G67.1973.

Restrictions

There are no restrictions on the use of the Riggs Family Papers.

Foreword

Processing of this collection was made possible through the summer internship provided annually by the Maine Maritime Museum for work in its library collections. Preparation of the inventory was aided by a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, a granting arm of the United States National

Archives and Records Administration. The inventory was finished by Project Archivist, Elizabeth Singer Maule.

Historical Note

Benjamin Riggs was born in Gloucester, Massachusetts on 27 March 1759 and was a shipmaster before he attained adulthood. He married Ruth Pearl of Edgecomb, Maine, in 1782 and two years later bought a farm at Robinhood Cove, later known as Riggsville, in Georgetown, Maine. Here he built vessels which he managed for the coastwise and West Indies trades. Vessels built by him included **Butler** (schooner, 1828, 98 tons), **Pilgrim** (brig, 1811, 124 tons), and **Sylph** (schooner, 1815, 80 tons). He died 2 January 1846.

Children of Benjamin and Ruth included Mary (1783- ?), James (1785-1866), Salley (1787- ?), Elles (1793- ?), Moses (1795-1886), Nancy Lane (1798-1800), Susannah (1801-1806), Warner (1804-1804), Benjamin Franklin (1805-1867), and Eliza Jane (1809- ?). The pamphlet *Georgetown on Arrowsic* states that Benjamin and Ruth had twelve children (p. 2).

James, the eldest son, was credited with building two schooners at Robinhood. The first, in 1822, was the 68-ton **William**, of which James was owner and master. He may have captained a second vessel, the 22-ton **Fairy**. James also launched a 38-ton schooner, **Experiment**, in 1818 in Edgecomb.

Moses, the third son of Benjamin and Ruth, was a captain in his own right. He was father of another captain, Kervin W. Riggs, who was born in 1829 in Georgetown to Moses and his first wife Martha Fisher (1798-1840). Kervin married Sarah Little (1831-1892) of Augusta on 16 December 1853. They lived in Georgetown, where Kervin died in 1906.

The firm of Sampson & Riggs is listed as one of Georgetown's merchants in the *Annual Register of Maine* for 1872. By 1874, however, the *Annual Register* lists the business under the name Moses Riggs.

Scope and Content

Physical Condition

Some documents are mildewed, show heavy foxing, or appear to have been gnawed upon, while others are quite crisp and clear. Older sheets have faded somewhat, and a few are missing portions of the original sheet of paper.

Description of the Papers

The collection consists of business-related correspondence and invoices regarding the elder Benjamin Riggs, invoices for the firm Sampson & Riggs, and Moses Riggs' business concerns following the apparent demise of Sampson & Riggs. Charter parties for various vessels and cargoes, ranging from lumber and fish to salt and ice, complement other shipping documents and captains' reports. The potential sale of some vessels is discussed in correspondence in Folders 1 and 3.

Folder 1 includes correspondence to the Riggs family, primarily Benjamin Riggs, from March 1826 to November 1867. Documents of note include letters from Riggs' apparent agent in Boston, Gideon Snow, regarding voyages of the brig **Pilgrim**, captains' letters following an 1826 voyage from Gibraltar to New York, and a damaged and incomplete letter, likely from Trinity [La Trinite], Martinique. One letter from and response to the Bath Custom House provides extensive information on the amount and type of traffic through the Gut on the Sasanoa River in 1867. Several letters come from sailors or fishermen asking for positions on one of the Riggs' fishing schooners, and a number of other sailing vessels are mentioned in various invoices. Finally, a long letter from James Beath to his sister mentions a number of individuals, including one Maxwell Reed, with whom Beath was apparently having a legal dispute. Beath may have been a master of the Riggs vessel **Liberator** later in his life, but nothing else has been found about his connection to the Riggs family.

Folder 2 contains charter parties, freight lists, lumber surveys, and other shipping information between the years 1817 and 1887. Charter parties specify such cargoes as salt from the West Indies, liver oil to New York, and coastal trade in molasses, lumber, ice, and coal. A government "Enrollment" certificate which provides the schooner **Fox** with the right "to be employed in the Coasting Trade and Fisheries" is also included.

Folder 3 consists of correspondence to the company Sampson & Riggs in the year 1867. Information regarding the purchase of dories and oars is included among general business correspondence.

Folder 4 contains bills (1855-1864) submitted to Sampson & Riggs for payment for goods to a variety of vessels, including the schooners **Queen of the West** and **Julia Franklin**.

Folder 5 includes a number of invoices submitted to various members of the Riggs family, primarily Moses and his son Kervin. All receipts are for vessel-related supplies, and cover the years 1829 to 1887. Most receipts come from Bath chandlers and general merchants. Some vessels are specifically identified.

Folder 6 contains a small book used primarily by Capt. John Johnson, probably of Woolwich, ME, to record mackerel and other fish catches made in the Gulf of St. Lawrence from about 1832-1844 on four different schooners, **Richmond**, **Mary & Louisa**, **Ann**, and **Louisa**. Shares for each crewman (most are named), including the cook, are listed. Also includes a few general vessel accounts. A few pages have been cut out.

Folder 7 has a few miscellaneous items which came with the collection. They include three sheets of blank stationery showing the Bath-built US Battleship **Georgia**, and a newspaper advertisement illustrating the steamer **Elsie**.

Container List

| | |
|----------|--------------------------------------|
| Folder 1 | Correspondence, 1826-1867 |
| 2 | Shipping Papers, 1817-1887 |
| 3 | Sampson & Riggs, correspondence 1867 |
| 4 | accounts, 1855-1864 |

| | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 5 | Accounts, 1829-1887 |
| 6 | Fishing tally book, ca. 1832-1844 |
| 7 | Miscellaneous |

Appendices

A. Sources and Related Materials

In addition to collection MS-6, the following sources were used in creating this finding aid and will provide further information on the family.

Vital Records of Georgetown, Maine, to the Year 1892, Mary Pelham Hill, ed., Maine Historical Society, 1941. Volume I documents births to 1892 and with Volume II covers marriages, while Volume III lists recorded deaths in the Georgetown area to 1892. Various lists of Riggs family vital records are included in this source.

References to the Riggs family, and especially the elder Benjamin Riggs, are available in William Avery Baker's *A Maritime History of Bath, Maine* (Bath: Marine Research Society, 1973 pgs 182, 330) and *History of Bath and Environs* by Parker McCobb Reed (Portland: Lakeside Press, 1894 p.317-318). Prints and photographs of members of the Riggs family and their home are in the library's collection of photographs.

The Riggs are also mentioned in the pamphlet *Georgetown on the Arrowsic: The Ancient Dominions of Maine on the Kennebec* by Stanwood C. and Margaret C. Gilman. (Privately printed, [1966]).

Information on the Riggs family is available in the library's Captains' file. References are made of Riggs vessels in a 4th of July (1865) regatta, listed in the *Bath Sentinel & Times*, 6 July 1865.

Vessel information for some ships mentioned in these documents can be found in the library's vessels card file some cards will lead to information in books such as *The Shipping Days of Old Boothbay* by George Wharton Rice (Boothbay Harbor, 1938). References may also be made to Custom House records, some of which are held by the library.

An unsigned, undated document found in the accessions file for this collection outlined some of the information making up this document. Although not cited, Baker's *Maritime History of Bath* provided most of the background for that document.

B. Added Entries

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| A. F. Kimball (Schooner) | Folder |
| 2Low[e], Francis Jr., Captain | 5 |
| Lucy Ann (Schooner) | 2 |
| Lumber trade | 1-3 |
| M. B. Rogers (Schooner) | 5 |
| Macherel fisheries | 6 |
| Manifests | 2 |
| Marion (Sloop) | 2 |
| Mary & Louisa (Schooner) | 6 |
| Mary O. Del (Steamer) | 5 |
| Moore, Bradford H. | 2 |
| Nickerson, George | 2 |
| Pilgrim (Brig) | 1 |
| Pocassett (Schooner) | 5 |
| Queen of the West (Schooner) | 4, 5 |
| Regulator (Schooner) | 3 |
| Richmond (Schooner) | 6 |
| Riggs, Benjamin (1759-1846) | 1, 2 |
| Riggs, James (1785-1866) | 2 |
| Riggs, Kervin W. (1829-1906) | 1, 5 |
| Riggs, Moses (1795-1886) | 2, 5 |
| Saint Lawrence, Gulf of | 6 |
| Salt trade | 2 |
| Sampson & Riggs | 3, 4 |
| Sasanoa (Schooner) | 5 |
| Sasanoa River (ME) | 1 |
| Sewall, Day & Co. | 4 |
| Shipbuilding--Georgetown (ME) | 1-5 |
| Shipping | 1-5 |
| Ships--Equipment and supplies | 1-5 |
| Ships--Registration and transfer | 1-3 |
| Swanton, Jameson & Co. | 5 |
| Sylph (schooner) | 2 |
| T. F. Secor (Steamer) | 4 |
| Timber--Grading | 2 |
| Volant (Brig) | 1 |
| West Indies trade | 1, 2 |
| Woolwich (ME) | 6 |
| Addie Hinckley (Schooner) | 5 |
| Albion (Schooner) | 2 |
| Allen Green (Schooner) | 2, 5 |
| Anabelle (?) | 1 |

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---------|
| Ann (Schooner) | 6 |
| Australia (Schooner) | 5 |
| Bath (ME)--Businesses | 4, 5 |
| Beath, James | 1 |
| Butler (Schooner) | 2, 5 |
| Charter parties | 1, 2, 3 |
| C. L. Hubbard (Sloop) | 2 |
| Coal trade | 2 |
| Coastwise shipping | 1-7 |
| Colby, H[enry ?] | 2 |
| Concern (Schooner) | 4 |
| Cora Greenwood (Schooner) | 3 |
| Denmark (Brig) | 2 |
| Dories (Boats) | 3 |
| Elsie (Steamer) | 7 |
| Emily F. Swift (Schooner) | 3 |
| Experiment (Schooner) | 2 |
| Fish trade | 6 |
| Fisheries | 1 |
| Fishing--Catch effort | 6 |
| Fishing--Records | |
| Fox (Schooner) | 2 |
| Freeman, Samuel | 1 |
| Geo. Fisher | 5 |
| Georgetown (ME) | 1-5 |
| Georgia (Battleship : BB15) | 7 |
| Goss & Sawyer | 2, 5 |
| Ice trade | 2 |
| Ino (Schooner) | 4 |
| Julia Franklin (Schooner) | 4 |
| Jumbo (Sloop) | 5 |
| Liberator (Schooner) | 3 |
| Louisa (Schooner) | 6 |
| Low[e], Francis Jr., Captain | 5 |
| Lucy Ann (Schooner) | 2 |
| Lumber trade | 1-3 |
| M. B. Rogers (Schooner) | 5 |
| Macherel fisheries | 6 |
| Manifests | 2 |
| Marion (Sloop) | 2 |
| Mary & Louisa (Schooner) | 6 |
| Mary O. Del (Steamer) | 5 |
| Moore, Bradford H. | 2 |
| Nickerson, George | 2 |

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------|
| Pilgrim (Brig) | 1 |
| Pocassett (Schooner) | 5 |
| Queen of the West (Schooner) | 4, 5 |
| Regulator (Schooner) | 3 |
| Richmond (Schooner) | 6 |
| Riggs, Benjamin (1759-1846) | 1, 2 |
| Riggs, James (1785-1866) | 2 |
| Riggs, Kervin W. (1829-1906) | 1, 5 |
| Riggs, Moses (1795-1886) | 2, 5 |
| Saint Lawrence, Gulf of | 6 |
| Salt trade | 2 |
| Sampson & Riggs | 3, 4 |
| Sasanoa (Schooner) | 5 |
| Sasanoa River (ME) | 1 |
| Sewall, Day & Co. | 4 |
| Shipbuilding--Georgetown (ME) | 1-5 |
| Shipping | 1-5 |
| Ships--Equipment and supplies | 1-5 |
| Ships--Registration and transfer | 1-3 |
| Swanton, Jameson & Co. | 5 |
| Sylph (schooner) | 2 |
| T. F. Secor (Steamer) | 4 |
| Timber--Grading | 2 |
| Volant (Brig) | 1 |
| West Indies trade | 1, 2 |
| Woolwich (ME) | 6 |